

## Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SPC-03 PM-03 SAJ-01 SAM-01 PRS-01

ACDA-10 IO-03 DRC-01 /069 W  
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R 131355Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6118  
USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA  
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2119

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON SCHLESINGER AND MAD.

1. SUMMARY: DURING CONVERSATION WITH POL COUNSELOR AT SOCIAL OCCASION FEBRUARY 12, COUNSELOR IN MFA'S USA DIVISION OLEG SOKOLOV COMMENTED BRIEFLY ON SECDEF SCHLESINGER'S RECENT STATEMENTS, SAID SOVIET SIDE ACCEPTS CONCEPT OF MUTUAL ASSURED DESTRUCTION, AND URGED THAT BOTH SIDES KEEP EACH OTHER INFORMED OF PROBLEMS AND VIEWS ON STRATEGIC QUESTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. RESPONDING TO COMMENT THAT CURRENT EFFORT IN SOVIET PRESS TO DEPICT SCHLESINGER AND U.S. DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT AS LEADERS OF OPPOSITION TO DETENTE IS NOT HELPFUL, SOKOLOV BEGAN BY POINTING OUT THAT PRESS HAD FOR A WHILE HELD BACK. BUT HUGE MILITARY BUDGET INCREASE, PLANS FOR NEW WEAPONS, AND NUMEROUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY SCHLESINGER PLAYING UP THE U.S.-SOVIET STRATEGIC CONFRONTATION RATHER THAN PLAYING IT DOWN, SEEMED TO CALL FOR SOME PUBLIC SOVIET RESPONSE. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION OF THE FACTS, SOKOLOV BACKED AWAY FROM THE BUDGET ARGUMENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED ALSO THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE REGARDED  
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AS A SINGLE UNIT BOTH IN NEGOTIATING SALT II AND IN PRESENTING

AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT TO CONGRESS. BUT HE PUBLICLY ARE DIRECTED AT THE SOVIETS, THEY COULD BE MADE BETTER IF DONE PRIVATELY. AND IF THEY ARE DIRECTED SOMEWHERE ELSE, SUCH AS TO THE U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESS, OR TO U.S. ALLIES, A FEW WORDS OF EXPLANATION TO THE SOVIETS IN PRIVATE WOULD BE HELPFUL.

3. ASKED WHY THE SOVIETS SEEM TO AVOID DISCUSSION OF CONCEPT OF MUTUAL ASSURED DESTRUCTION (MAD), SOKOLOV SAID THAT SOVIET SIDE FULLY ACCEPTS THE CONCEPT. BUT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IT USEFUL TO AIR SUCH CONCEPTS PUBLICLY BECAUSE TO DO SO GIVES IMPRESSION THAT THE TWO SIDES CONTEMPLATE WITH EQUANIMITY THE IDEA OF DESTROYING EACH OTHER. FOR THIS REASON, SOVIET SCHOLARS -- UNLIKE AMERICAN SCHOLAR -- HAVE AVOIDED THE SUBJECT. (COMMENT: SOVIET SCHOLARS NOT ONLY AVOID THE SUBJECT IN PUBLIC, BUT IN PRIVATE AS WELL; THIS WAS CONFIRMED IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION AT SAME FUNCTION WITH G. A. TROFIMENKO, WHOSE ARTICLE IN CURRENT USA MAGAZINE DISCUSSED EARLIER U.S. STRATEGIC CONCEPTS BUT STOPPED SHORT OF MAD. AS IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS, TROFIMENKO WOULD SCARCELY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT MAD CONCEPT EXISTED.)

4. IN UNENLIGHTENING DISCUSSION OF NEW U.S. AND SOVIET WEAPONS SYSTEMS, SOKOLOV ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPACT ON U.S. OPINION OF SOVIET MIRVING AND NEW MISSILES, BUT SEEMED TO APPROACH THE QUESTION FROM THE BARGAINING-CHIP POINT OF VIEW.

5. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH SOKOLOV, DAVID ABSHIRE OF GEORGETOWN CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES UNDERLINED TO SOKOLOV THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT SETTING UP SCHLESINGER AS AN OPPONENT BY DESCRIBING THE EXTREMELY HIGH REGARD IN WHICH THE SECDEF IS HELD BY INFLUENTIAL CIRCLES IN CONGRESS.

6. USDAO, MOSCOW, WHICH HAS FREQUENTLY REPORTED DOUBT ABOUT SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION, NOTES THAT SOKOLOV'S STATEMENT IS THE MOST POSITIVE EVIDENCE OF SOVIET ACCEPTANCE YET SEEN. IT BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONTINUED RELUCTANCE OF SOVIET SCHOLARS, AND ALL THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH SOVIET NUCLEAR STRATEGY, TO DISCUSS MAD, IS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THIS ONE POSITIVE STATEMENT.

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DUBS

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** PERSONAL OPINION, DETENTE, PRESS COMMENTS, NUCLEAR WARFARE  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 13 FEB 1974  
**DecapTION Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**DecapTION Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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